Our Boys and Girls

A BOY SCOUT OF OLD.

One sultry day, many long years ago, two eleven-year-old boys met on the bank of a small river. It was long past noon, and the sun glowed like a red ball in the haze, its rays casting a weird light over the surrounding landscape. The little village of log houses stood less than half a mile away. Nearer still loomed the walls of a stout log stockade, built, as was commonly done in those days, for protection in case of a sudden Indian attack.

The river banks were fringed with a stunted growth of trees; but elsewhere, on every side, the prairie stretched as far as the eye could see, the long grass dry as tinder from the summer heat.

"Ain't this a regular scorcher of a day, Fred?" asked one of the boys, throwing himself at full length on the grass.

A fish darted away, as he dipped his hand into the cool water, and his companion watched it disappear before answering.

"Yes, it is, John; too hot to work. I got my work done—worked liked a good one to do it, too—and father said I might go a-fishing. Here's my line and father's new knife. We can get a rod 'most anywhere along the river."

"Me, too; I'm going." And John exhibited a stick with a fishline wound around it. "My work is done, but father didn't exactly say I could go so far from the stockade. He said he was afraid of Indians. They are on the warpath at Big Fork, and that's only thirty miles from here."

"Nonsense! There hasn't been seen an Indian round here for six months. I'm going fishing. There must be lots of big ones by the bend now," and Fred moved on.

"I'm going, too!" cried John, jumping up to follow his companion.

A quarter of a mile below them, the river made a sharp bend, and flowed for some distance between steep, high banks. It was a place where fish liked to hide in deep, shady nooks, and no one knew it better than Fred. If you followed the bank of the river, the bend was more than a mile from the village, but it was not more than half that distance across the prairie. Of course, the river bank was the pleasantest to travel on hot days.

"We'll follow the bank and get our poles—there's time enough," said Fred. "The grass is high on the prairie, and so dry that it almost crumbles when you step on it. The sun is like a coal of fire, too. It will be lots better to follow the river."

"Here are some poles now!" exclaimed John. "Aren't they straight and limber, though! I just know I could sling out a three-pounder with one of them."

"Better hook him first! Let's see who'll get to the bend first."

Fred started ahead, and both boys ran as fast as possible along the edge of the bushes which skirted the bank. They were nearing the bend, when Fred suddenly stopped, with a warning gesture, and pointed to an object above the bank.

It was only a long black feather with a dash of crimson across it, but the boys knew instinctively that it adorned an Indian scalp lock.

John silently sank into the tall grass. Fred dropped the pole and crept nearer—so near that he could see more than a score of hideously painted savages, with their backs toward him, and concluded that they belonged to the band upon the warpath. Throwing himself flat, he listened as their voices became louder and more eager.

He had often visited the camps of friendly Indians, and could understand enough of their language to know that the village was to be attacked that very night.

Cautiously he worked his way back to where John waited in breathless suspense, and, without uttering a word, motioned him to follow. With a lingering reluctant glance at the now useless fishpole, John obeyed.

"We've got to leg it," Fred softly whispered, when they were a few yards away from the dangerous vicinity of the savages. "There's a whole party of them and they're out for all our scalps. We've got to warn the folks. Here's the old wagon trail, and the grass isn't quite so tangled. Bend as low, John, as you possibly can run; that's it. Now go!"

For some minutes nothing was heard except the rustling of the dried grass and the heavy breathing of the hurrying boys. Then a wild yell of angry surprise told them they were discovered by the foe.

"Run, John, run! Leg it as you never did before!" gasped Fred. "I got you into this scrape, and I've just got to get you out of it!" The yells had ceased, but Fred knew Indian tactics too well to believe that they had given up the pursuit. He looked over his shoulder fearfully. It was as he thought. A head showed plainly above the waving grass about a quarter of a mile behind them. That was all, but it was enough to chill every drop of blood in his body, and make the sunny prairie grow black before his terrified eyes.

"Run—on, John. Tell—the—folks—the—Indians—are—coming! Run hard! I'll stop 'em—if—I—can—start—a—back—fire!" he panted, waving his hand toward the stockade, which was now in sight.

Without a single pause, John sped on through the tangled grass, his breath coming in painful gasps, but terror winging his feet. He did not see Fred draw a match from his pocket with nervous haste. It was all he had. If it failed to burn, his life would pay the forfeit. But he did not hestitate an instant. He raised one hand, as he stopped abruptly. The wind was blowing directly from the village, and that was what he wanted.

He lighted the precious match, shielded it from the breeze, and touched it to a bunch of tall, dry grass. The little flame caught and spread rapidly. But his work was not done. Waving a blazing torch of grass, he started other fires, which widened as they swept toward the amazed Indians, who fled with cries of rage and dismay. Only a moment he paused to view his work with heart thrilling with triumph, then he darted after John to the village, to tell his story to the anxious crowd that now surrounded the other boy.

"You are quite a scout, my son, and I'm pround of you," said his father, clasping the brave boy's hands in his own. "Always do your duty well, Fred, and you will have nothing to fear. I miss my guess if our red neighbors don't find a welcome if they come tonight."

But they did not come and no sign of them could be seen upon the blackened prarie.

Fred became a famous scout in later years, and John a brave soldier, while the log village afterward became a beautiful, prosperous city.—What To Do.

WHEN TONY LIKED MISS PERKINS.

Tony came home from school one day very cross, indeed. "Why, what is the matter?" mother asked.

"They put Miss Butler in another room, and we have a new teacher," he answered.

"Oh, yes," said mother, "I remember I heard that one of the teachers was going away to teach in another town, and that Miss Butler was to be promoted to her place. Who is your teacher now?"

"Her name is Miss Perkins. And I don't like her. I want Miss Butler."

"But, dear, you can't have her until you get to that grade. It will be two years yet."

"Well, I don't want to go to Miss Perkins."

"But you must, Tony. She is the only teacher for your grade."

"But I don't like her," insisted Tony.

"Why don't you like her?" asked mother, looking grave.

"Because—because—I don't know. I just don't know."

"Then you have no reason. That is foolish not to like a person and not know why. You will like her, no doubt, when you get used to her," said mother cheerfully. "Don't worry about it; run and play now."

"Where is Greylegs?"

"I don't know, dear. She was playing in the hall a while before you came in."

Tony ran out into the hall, but his kitten was not there. He went all over the house calling her. But she was not to be seen.

"Perhaps she is out in the yard," suggested mother.

Tony went out into the yard and called Greylegs. There was no sign of her.

"She isn't any place," he said, running back to his mother in the sitting room.

"Oh, she is around somewhere," returned mother. "I want you to go on an errand for me."

When Tony returned from the errand he looked for his kitten again, but could not find her.

"It is strange," said his mother, "I wonder if she could have gotten out when Mrs. Graham was going. She was here making a call, and we stood at the open door a few minutes talking. Greylegs may have run out then."

Tony went up and down the street and around the block, and inquired at the neighbors' houses, but no one had seen Greylegs.

Tony felt so bad about it that he scarcely touched his supper, and went to bed crying. He did love the kitten very much. She had been sent him by his grandmother, and he had never had a kitten before.

He started for school a very sad little boy indeed. It was bad enough, he thought, not to have the teacher he wanted, without losing his dear Greylegs.

He walked very slowly. "I don't care if I am late," he thought. However, he got to school just as the children were all going in. And Miss Perkins was not there. The principal came into the room and said, "Children, Miss Perkins has not come yet, but I think she will be here. Something has detained her, likely. Try to be quiet for a little while."

He had scarcely finished speaking when in came Miss Perkins, all out of breath.